AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows:

Kindly insert the following section heading and paragraph on page 1 before the first line:

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a divisional of U.S. Application No. 09/617,805, filed on July 14, 2000.

In compliance with 37 C.F.R. §1.823(a), please insert the attached paper copy of the "Sequence Listing" after the last page of the above-identified application.

Kindly replace the paragraph beginning on page 7, line 11, and ending on page 7, line 14, with the following amended paragraph:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1A shows a CLUSTAL W (1.8) alignment of *Arabidopsis* (truncated to the ChloroP predicted transit peptide) (SEQ ID NO.: 7) and *E. coli* peptide deformylase proteins (SEQ ID NO.: 8).

Kindly replace the paragraph beginning on page 7, line 15, and ending on page 7, line 19, with the following amended paragraph:

Figure 1B shows a CLUSTAL W (1.8) alignment of *Arabidopsis* (truncated to the ChloroP predicted transit peptide) (SEQ ID NO.: 9) and *Chlamydia* peptide deformylase proteins (SEQ ID NO.: 10). All three conserved proteins motifs found in prokaryotic sequences are present in the *Arabidopsis* peptide deformylase (*At*DEF1).

Kindly replace the paragraph beginning on page 51, line 2, and ending on page 51, line 16, with the following amended paragraph:

First strand cDNA was prepared from RNA isolated from *Arabidopsis thaliana* cells using gene specific primers RLH 146 (SEQ ID NO.: 1) and 147 (SEQ ID NO.: 2) having the sequence 5' TTG TCG ACA AAA GCC GGT TGG 3' and 5' TCA TTG AGG TCC GAG CTT AG 3', respectively. The reverse transcription reaction was carried out in a 20 μl reaction volume containing 4 μl of RNA (150ng/ml), 1.5 μl of 3' antisense oligo (likely RLH 147) (10 μM stock diluted to a final concentration of 0.75 μM), 8.5 μl of water, 1 μl of 20mM each dATP, dGTP, dCTP, dTTP (final concentration of 1mM), 2 μl of $MgCl_2$ (to final concentration of 5mM), 2 μl of PCR buffer (10X: 200mM Tris-HCl, pH 8.4, 500 mM KCl) used according to the manufacturer's instructions (Gibco BRL® Life Technologies™) and 200 units of MMLV reverse transcriptase (Gibco BRL® Life Technologies™) for 30 minutes at 42°C in a RoboCycler® Gradient 40 Temperature Cycler (Stratagene®; La

Jolla, CA, USA 92037). This reaction was terminated by incubation at 99° C for 5 minutes and subsequently cooled to 6° C.

Kindly replace the paragraph beginning on page 63, line 12, and ending on page 64, line 3, with the following amended paragraph:

Primers were designed to amplify PCR products encoding the entire putative protein and the ChloroP-predicted chloroplast-length protein, respectively (RLH219 (SEQ ID NO.: 3): 5'-CATATGGCCGTCTGTAACTGCTTC-3' and RLH220 (SEQ ID NO.: 4): 5'-CATATGGCAGAAGTAAAGCGCGTCTC-3'). These primers included an *NdeI* restriction enzyme site for eventual subcloning into expression vector, pET23. Primers against the 3' end of the genomic sequence encoding the C-terminus of the putative sequence were designed to include the endogenous stop codon and remove the stop codon resulting in a C-terminal 6X-His tag upon subcloning in the expression vector, respectively (RLH221 (SEQ ID NO.: 5): 5'-CTCGAGTCAACGTTTGCCAAAACC-3'; RLH222 (SEQ ID NO.: 6): 5'-CTCGAGACGTTTGCCAAAACCAAC-3'). These 3'-end primers included a *XhoI* restriction enzyme site for eventual subcloning into expression vector, pET23.